

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8609

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COMUSTDC TAIPEI TW

CHMAAG CHINA TAIPEI TW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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CINCPAC FOR J-74 AND POLAD

SECDEF FOR OASD/PA

JOINT EMBASSY/TDC MESSAGE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, TW

SUBJECT: UPI STORY ON TAIPEI AIR STATION

REFERENCE: (A) COMUSTDC 180823Z FEB 76

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF UPI STORY RESULTING FROM INTERVIEW REPORTED REF A. THE STORY APPEARED IN FEBRUARY 21 PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES. A SIMILAR, BUT EDITED VERSION APPEARED IN FEBRUARY 20 ENGLISH-LANGUAGE CHINA NEWS.

2. QUOTE: THE TAIPEI AIR STATION (TAS) WHICH HOUSES THE U.S. AIR COMMAND IN TAIWAN, WILL BE CLOSED DOWN BY SUMMER, FURTHER REDUCING U.S. MILITARY STRENGTH ON THE ISLAND TO 2,300, AN AMERICAN MILITARY SPOKESMAN SAID THURSDAY.

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3. AFFECTED BY THE WITHDRAWAL WILL BE 200 MILITARY PERSONNEL

AND WILL RESULT IN THE PHASING OUT OF THE 327TH U.S. AIR DIV. THE SPOKESMAN SAID A RESIDUAL GROUP OF ABOUT 30 PERSONS, HOWEVER, WILL BE LEFT TO TAKE CARE OF THE LIAISON WORK OF AIR DEFENSE MATTERS WITH TAIWAN.

4. THE CLOSING DOWN OF THE 20-YEAR OLD TAS IS PART OF THE CONTINUING REDUCTION AND REALIGNMENT OF U.S. FORCES OVERSEAS, LT. CMDR. NEIL THOMPSON SAID.

5. "BESIDES THERE IS NO NEED TO HAVE AN AIR FORCE HEAD-QUARTERS IN TAIWAN IN VIEW OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF AIR FORCES IN THE BASES IN CHING CHUANG KANG (CCK) AND TAINAN LAST SUMMER," HE SAID.

6. AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE LAST SQUADRON OF U.S. F4 PHANTOM JETS IN MAY 1975, THE U.S. HAS NO COMBAT UNITS ON THE ISLAND. BOTH CCK AND TAINAN AIR BASES HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO CARETAKER STATUS.

7. A NATIONALIST CHINESE MILITARY SPOKESMAN WHO CONFIRMED THAT REPORT SAID THE WITHDRAWAL WILL "HAVE LITTLE EFFECT SINCE THE NECESSARY DUTIES WILL BE CARRIED BY OTHER UNITS." HE DID NOT ELABORATE.

8. THOMPSON ALSO SAID THE REDUCTION OF U.S. FORCES WILL NOT HAVE MUCH IMPACT ON TAIWAN'S DEFENSE ABILITY SINCE THE US-TAIWAN MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY IS INTACT AND "THERE ARE POTENTIAL U.S. MILITARY RESOURCES IN THE VICINITY WHICH CAN BE USED IN TIME OF HOSTILITY."

9. THE PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF THE 2,500 U.S. MILITARY MEN ON THE ISLAND ARE IN THE FIELDS OF COMMUNICATIONS, PLANNING AND ADVISORY, LOGISTICS AND ADMINISTRATION.

10. DESPITE SPECULATIONS, THOMPSON SAID THERE IS NO PLAN TO CLOSE DOWN OR TO FURTHER REDUCE THE U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUPS (MAAG) IN TAIWAN.

11. MAAG WHICH WAS SET UP IN TAIWAN 26 YEARS AGO NOW HAS A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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TOTAL STRENGTH OF 50 OFFICERS, DOWN FROM 200 A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO. THEIR PRIMARY ACTIVITIES NOW ARE TO FACILITATE PROCUREMENT AND SALES OF U.S. ARMS TO TAIWAN. END QUOTE.

12. THE ABOVE STORY IS REASONABLY ACCURATE REFLECTION OF WHAT TDC PAO SAID DURING INTERVIEW WITH FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS:

A. TDC PAO INDICATED THAT RESIDUAL GROUP WAS ALREADY OPERATING (PARA 3).

B. STATEMENT ABOUT MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY AND QUOTATION CONCERNING POTENTIAL U.S. MILITARY RESOURCES IN THE VICINITY WERE TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT OF SEPARATE EXPLANATION CONCERNING USTDC MISSION (PARA 8).

C. STATEMENT CONCERNING MAAG ROC ACTIVITIES WAS NOT MADE BY TDC PAO (PARA 11).

D. STATEMENT THAT THERE IS NO PLAN TO CLOSE DOWN OR FURTHER REDUCE MAAG WAS TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT OF REPLY TO QUERY CONCERNING WIDELY PUBLICIZED GAO REPORT RECOMMENDING CLOSURE OF MAAG'S WORLDWIDE (PARA 10).
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